

Gary Cohen
c/o Jack Anderson
1401 16 St., NW
Wash., D.C. 20036

5/17/78

Dear Gary,

If you have not yet learned it, the avuncular is not always a putdown or intended to be a putdown. But I do intend this as a lecture, the kind you might get from your grandfather.

I ought not have to get up at 4:30 and work until 10 and have to make repeated and unanswered calls to a young reporter who considers himself too busy or too important to return any of them when his own word, meaning his integrity, is in question.

About a month ago, after some bad experiences, I gave you some materials with a two-week deadline for use. The clear understanding was that if Jack did not use the materials, which is entirely his business, within two weeks you would first let me know and then return them. You understood that I had unselfish purposes and that there was a real deadline.

It may be that because you did not keep your word a man has just gone to jail and has the possibility, if not the probability, of spending a dozen years there and if those responsible for it are vindictive enough may have a false but serious added charge on top of it all.

One of the stories had to do with black-bag jobs on Carol Pepper and John Ray, sister and brother of James Earl Ray. John was due for parole yesterday. He was out of jail and despite very bad, really abusive treatment by the House assassins committee, had gotten himself a job and had a chance, in middle age, of going straight and making his own, non-criminal way.

Jim and I knew the viciousness of the House assassins whose star chamber proceedings the unfearing Merry-Go-Round column has not yet found the balls to expose. This seriously inhibited what Jim dared do to defend these two people who quite clearly were being victimized by the bankrupt committee.

A little light was needed. You may have wasted all our daylight. I do know that the effort to undo or relieve what these vicious people did has wasted much time for Jim and me, time neither of us have when we both seek to perform public functions without any income from it or support in the effort.

Moreover, with some of the material, you have cost me a chance to make a sale. When I have no regular income this is significant to me.

As you are well aware, I can't deal with two people on the same material. This is why we agreed on a time and why I asked for the return of the material more than a week ago. When I did not receive it I phoned and you promised to return it. You have not.

Now my wife and I, aside from health problems, are past 65. Should my wife have to stand at the copying machine and duplicate what you have at her age? I am not physically able to stand still. We are not financially able to absorb the cost. You have a copying machine available to you. But with the word of two young reporters given to us, should we have any such need?

I have no complaint about Jack's editorial decisions. I may not agree with them but as I've tried to explain to Murray, they are Jack's decisions to make, not mine. I learned about them when I was younger than Murray, from a wise and fine city editor who drew me aside one early morning, handed me back some copy, told me "Son, Mr. Dupont would not like this" and suggested what I might be able to do with it. As a result I was syndicated when I was about 16 or 17, as a feature writer.

You and Murray have two sets of records I would like back promptly. Please wrap them well and insure them. Murray also has a pen that I do want. He has promised to return it often. It can be included.

Excuse the typos. It is so early I'm sure you young fogies are still asleep and I've other work I've had to let go to write this, something I should not have had to take time for -- and I re-emphasize would not have had to take time for if you'd kept your word.

Sincerely,